

MECHANICS' OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

GENTLEMEN,

At a Meeting of Deputies* from the different Branches of the Institution, at Leeds, Aug. 16th, convened to arrange its affairs more to the satisfaction of its members, so many alterations in our Rules were found to be indispensable, that it was thought some explanation would be necessary. The Meeting did me the honour of appointing me to draw up an address to you on this subject: the following is therefore respectfully submitted to you.

At the above Meeting, it was unanimously agreed upon that the Rules should be enrolled, in accordance with the Regulations of the Friendly Society Act, passed in the 49th year of his late Majesty's reign. With this view the Free Gift and the Relief when out of work were united in one Institution under one code of Rules, to be called in future, 'The Mechanics' Friendly Institution, for the relief of fellow-workmen in distress and sickness, and for the burial of the dead:' still leaving the members at liberty to be entitled to both or only one of the advantages above stated, as they think proper.

The proceedings of the above Meeting were conducted with the utmost propriety, and the greatest unanimity and good feeling prevailed the whole time of its sitting. Our own interests and those of our employers were considered inseparable, and no conclusions come to, as it is hoped will appear from the rules, that manifest any sentiments of hostility to them.

Rule I. gives to one son of every Mechanic, if under 21 years of age, the privilege of becoming a member of the Institution, with his father's consent, or at his death.

It was understood that all who are working as Mechanics at the present time, or who may enter within two months after our next November Meeting, shall be admitted as members: and such as have withdrawn shall be received again as members, on paying 7s. 6d. entrance, before the time above specified; after which, no members shall be admitted except according to the rules.

The alterations in Rule II. were thought advisable, as they would save many committee meetings, and consequently much trouble and expence to the Institution.

The number of members on the committee, according to Rule III. appeared to us sufficient for the largest branches, and not disproportionate to the smallest, as five can act.

The Rules from the IV. to the VII. inclusive, it is hoped, will require no explanation.

According to the VIII. Rule, it was determined that no person shall in future act as Secretary who is not a member and working at the trade, and that no secretary be allowed to hold the key of the box in which our accounts and money are deposited.

In explanation of Rule IX. it may be well to state, that the committee will have to meet with the President, Secretary, and Stewards, every meeting night, to transact business, and will be entitled to the allowance stated in the rule when called together on any other occasion connected with the Institution.

The X. and XI. Rules will be found sufficiently explicit.

According to Rule XII. any person being a member of this Institution, and paying 1½d. per week will be entitled to relief when on travel, to £3 on the death of his wife, should she die before him, and his friends to £4 towards his funeral expences, at his decease. Any member paying 3d. per week will be entitled to all the benefits of the institution.

From the XIII. to the XXII. Rule, it is hoped all will be understood.

By Rule XXIII. and XXIX. it will be seen, that every branch must make a clear statement of its accounts for the present year, up to the first week in September inst. and send it to Bradford by the first week in October next; and that branch will make out the General Accounts of the Institution for the present year, and probably make the return by our first meeting in November.

The regulation of Rule XXV. by which any member's case is left to the decision of the Committee after he has been relieved two years, is one of pure charity. If such Committee think such individual a proper object of charity, they shall continue to him 8d. a day for six months longer.

It is to be understood by Rule XXVII. that any person having paid 1½d. per week, for six months, may, if desirous, become a full member by paying 5s. and the regular payment of 3d. per week afterwards, and be entitled to all the advantages of the Institution.

In referring to Rule XXX. we do not know whether we shall have any money to put out to Interest, as our contributions are so small; but we think it very advisable, as much as possible, to prepare for emergencies, and that deposit funds are very desirable. Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham might be the funds for the whole Kingdom. The corresponding members must reside in these places. This is on the supposition that Manchester will acquiesce in what was done at the Leeds Meeting; if not, Bolton was agreed upon in its place. At present we can give you no satisfactory account of Manchester, and shall not be able before the last week in the present month, at which time I shall write to the Bradford Branch informing them of the result, and they will include the intelligence in the returns. From a letter recently received from Manchester, we believe all things will be agreeable in the end, and that they will coalesce with the Institution. I am, however, requested by Mr. Simpson, President of the Heywood Meeting, to state, that he wrote to the Manchester Branch, informing them of what had been done at Heywood, and that the Society would wait three months for their determination. He read his letter in the presence of fourteen of his shopmates, and sent it by post to Manchester. This letter, they say, never came to hand, but it was the prevailing opinion of the Leeds Meeting, that the information it contained was suppressed by a few individuals.

The remaining part of the Rules are strictly according to the Regulations of the Magistrates respecting Friendly Societies.

It was resolved at Leeds, that the expences of that Meeting should not be included in this year's accounts.

The above explanation, I trust, will render the new rules acceptable to you, and to all the branches of the Institution. The Deputies have had no other object in view than the prosperity and advantage of all our fellow-workmen and of our employers, and hope that their labours will meet with your approbation.

Before I conclude, I cannot but acknowledge the kind co-operation of Messrs. Settle, Luty, and Barlow, all the Members of the Leeds Branch, and all the Deputies from other places. Mr. J. M. Clanaghan, from Belfast, did honour to the branch by which he was deputed. We should have been happy to have seen some of our Dublin friends, but did not, as we believe they had not received intelligence of the Meeting. The Hyde Branch, near Manchester, is going on very prosperously. The Meeting at Leeds would have been glad to have availed itself of the assistance of their worthy Secretary, and lament that he was not deputed by them. The Branch at Chouldent had not intelligence of the Meeting at Leeds, or they would have attended by deputy.

I remain,

ON BEHALF OF THE MEETING OF DEPUTIES AND MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTION.

Yours, respectfully,

ABRAHAM LARGE.

Printed by order of the Society.

Bolton, Lancashire, Sept. 15th, 1821.

* For a List of which, see the New Rules.—Those Branches that did not correspond with the Meeting by Deputy or Letter have since acquiesced in the measures adopted.

§ For further information, see the Bradford Yearly Statement, for 1823.

J. OGILY, PRINTER, BOLTON.

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